

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 15 and 21 have been amended. Applicant has amended the currently pending claims in order to expedite prosecution and do not, by this amendment, intend to abandon subject matter of the claims as originally filed or later presented. Moreover, Applicant reserves the right to pursue such subject matter in a continuing application. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-13 and 15-24 are pending in this patent application. Reconsideration of the rejections in view of the remarks below is requested.

Entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary; and (e) were not made earlier because they are made in response to the points first presented in the final Office Action. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested along with withdrawal of the final Office Action.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13, 15, 18 and 20-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,844,662 to Akimoto et al. (“Akimoto et al.”) further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,737,207 to Imai (“Imai”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection, without prejudice.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited portions of Akimoto et al., Imai and the combination thereof fail to disclose, teach or suggest a lithocell comprising, *inter alia*, a transport system, outside of the lithographic apparatus and the track, configured to transport the substrate along an elongate transporter pathway between the track and the lithographic apparatus, wherein the track and the lithographic apparatus are side by side along their respective long sides and the transport system extends along a short side of the lithographic apparatus, the track, or both as recited in independent claim 1 and a transport system, external to the track and lithographic apparatus, configured to transport the substrate between the track and the lithographic apparatus, the transport system comprising a robot arm pivotable about an axis at its first end and adapted to hold a substrate at its opposite end, wherein the track and the lithographic apparatus are side by side along their respective long sides and the

transport system extends along a short side of the lithographic apparatus, the track, or both as recited in independent claim 15. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited portions of Akimoto et al., Imai and the combination thereof fail to disclose, teach or suggest a device manufacturing method using a lithocell comprising, *inter alia*, transporting the substrate to the lithographic apparatus from the track using a transporter between and external to them, wherein the track and the lithographic apparatus are side by side along their respective long sides and the transporter extends along a short side of the lithographic apparatus, the track, or both as recited in independent claim 21.

Akimoto et al. merely discloses a resist coating/development processing system that comprises a first processing section, a second processing section, a loader/unloader section, and an exposure section. The loader/unloader section is provided between the first processing section and the second processing section, and both processing sections are positioned apart from each other by the loader/unloader section. The exposure processing section is connected to the second processing section through an interface section. However, the exposure processing section may be connected to the loader/ unloader section through the interface section. These sections may be connected to each other such that these processing sections are attachable to and detachable from each other, by a connection mechanism. Akimoto et al., col. 2, line 60 to col. 3, line 8.

However, Akimoto et al. fails to disclose a processing section being side by side with the exposure section along their respective long sides and the transport system extending along a short side of the exposure section, the processing section, or both. For example, in Figure 4 of Akimoto et al., there is no substrate transport system extending along a short side of a processing section, the exposure section, or both. Then, for example, in Figure 6 of Akimoto et al., there is no processing section side to side with the exposure section along their respective long sides.

As noted in Applicant's specification, the typical configuration of the track and lithographic apparatus is that they are in "an in-line configuration, where one end of the track is aligned with one end of the lithographic apparatus; or an orthogonal configuration, where the track is placed perpendicularly to the lithographic apparatus, depending on the reach of the robot arm and the position of the load port of the lithographic apparatus. Because the configurations of the lithocell are limited, lithographic apparatus sizes are limited, as is the packing density of such lithocells in a fab." Applicant's specification, paragraph 5. Thus, an advantage of the claimed invention is that it is "possible to have a more efficient packing of

[the track and the lithographic apparatus] and a greater density to be packed into a smaller space.” Applicant’s specification, paragraph 15.

Further, the cited portions of Imai et al. fail to overcome the shortcomings of Akimoto et al. and/or to independently disclose, teach or suggest claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13, 15, 18 and 20-24.

Imai was merely cited to disclose the details of a lithographic apparatus. However, Imai fails to disclose, teach or suggest, for example, a track being side by side with a lithographic apparatus along their respective long sides and the transport system extending along a short side of the lithographic apparatus, the track, or both. For example, Figure 1 depicts a typical lithographic apparatus – track configuration as pictured in Figure 2(b) of Applicant’s specification.

Therefore, for at least the above reasons, the cited portions of Akimoto et al. and/or Imai fail to disclose, teach or suggest all the features recited by independent claims 1, 15 and 21. Claims 3, 5, 7-11, 13 and 24 depend from independent claim 1, claims 18 and 20 depend from independent claim 15, and claims 22 and 23 depend from independent claim 21 and are, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons provided above related to respectively claims 1, 15 and 21, and for the additional features recited in those dependent claims. As a result, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) of claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 13, 15, 18 and 20-24 in view of Akimoto et al. and/or Imai should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

The Office Action rejected claims 6, 17 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of Akimoto et al., further in view of Imai and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,963,753 to Ohtani et al. (“Ohtani et al.”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection, without prejudice.

As noted above, Akimoto et al. and Imai fail to disclose, teach or suggest independent claims 1 and 15. Claim 6 depends from claim 1 and is, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons provided above regarding Akimoto et al. and Imai as related to independent claim 1, and for the additional features recited in that dependent claim. Claims 17 and 19 depend from claim 15 and are, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons provided above regarding Akimoto et al. and Imai as related to independent claim 15, and for the additional features recited in that dependent claim.

Further, the cited portions of Ohtani et al. fail to overcome the shortcomings of Akimoto et al. and Imai and/or to independently disclose, teach or suggest claims 6, 17 and 19.

Ohtani et al. was merely cited to disclose a plurality of lithographic apparatus. However, Ohtani et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest, for example, a track being side by side with a lithographic apparatus along their respective long sides and the transport system extending along a short side of the lithographic apparatus, the track, or both. For example, Figures 1, 4, 6, 13 and 17 of Ohtani et al. merely depict typical lithographic apparatus – track configurations as pictured in Figure 2(b) of Applicant's specification.

Therefore, for at least the above reasons, the cited portions of Akimoto et al., Imai and/or Ohtani et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest all the features recited by claims 6, 17 and 19. As a result, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) of claims 6, 17 and 19 in view of Akimoto et al., Imai and/or Ohtani et al. should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

The Office Action rejected claims 2 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of Akimoto et al., further in view of Imai and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,399,531 to Wu ("Wu"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection, without prejudice.

As noted above, Akimoto et al. and Imai fail to disclose, teach or suggest independent claims 1 and 15. Claim 2 depends from claim 1 and is, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons provided above regarding Akimoto et al. and Imai as related to independent claim 1, and for the additional features recited in that dependent claim. Claim 16 depends from claim 15 and is, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons provided above regarding Akimoto et al. and Imai as related to independent claim 15, and for the additional features recited in that dependent claim.

Further, the cited portions of Wu fail to overcome the shortcomings of Akimoto et al. and Imai and/or to independently disclose, teach or suggest claims 2 and 16.

Wu was merely cited to disclose a mini-environment. While the cited portions of Wu describe wafer transfer from a lithography area to other equipment such as etching and deposition tools, Wu fail to disclose, teach or suggest, for example, a track being side to side with a lithographic apparatus along their respective long sides and the transport system extending along a short side of the lithographic apparatus, the track, or both.

Therefore, for at least the above reasons, the cited portions of Akimoto et al., Imai and/or Wu fail to disclose, teach or suggest all the features recited by claims 2 and 16. As a

result, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) of claims 2 and 16 in view of Akimoto et al., Imai and/or Wu should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

The Office Action rejected claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of Akimoto et al., further in view of Imai and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,604,624 to Hirata et al. (“Hirata et al.”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection, without prejudice.

As noted above, Akimoto et al. and Imai fail to disclose, teach or suggest independent claim 1. Claim 12 depends from claim 1 and is, therefore, patentable for at least the same reasons provided above regarding Akimoto et al. and Imai as related to independent claim 1, and for the additional features recited in that dependent claim.

Further, the cited portions of Hirata et al. fail to overcome the shortcomings of Akimoto et al. and Imai and/or to independently disclose, teach or suggest claim 12. Hirata et al. describe a particular implementation of a wafer transport system to move wafers around a fab as is conventional in the art. This wafer transport system may move, for example, wafers between lithocells (combinations of lithographic apparatus and track). An example of such a wafer transport system is shown as automated material handling system (AMHS) 60 in Figure 4 of the Applicant’s application and described in paragraph 70 on page 11 of the Applicant’s specification. However, Hirata et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest a transport system, outside of the lithographic apparatus and the track, configured to transport the substrate along an elongate transporter pathway between the track and the lithographic apparatus, wherein the track and the lithographic apparatus are side by side along their respective long sides and the transport system extends along a short side of the lithographic apparatus, the track, or both.

Therefore, for at least the above reasons, the cited portions of Akimoto et al., Imai and/or Hirata et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest all the features recited by claim 12. As a result, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) of claim 12 in view of Akimoto et al., Imai and/or Hirata et al. should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

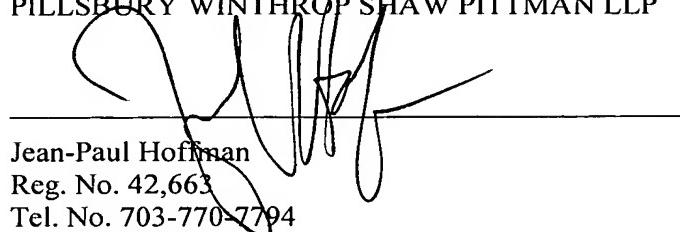
All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. If questions relating to patentability remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to discuss them.

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Should any fees be due, please charge them to our deposit account no. 03-3975, under our order no. 081468/0308381. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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